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HEADQUARTERS OFFICE
1515 State Street, Salem, Oregon 97301
or P.O. Box 2307, Salem, Oregon 97308
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1009 S.W. Fifth Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97204
Room 105 Telephone: 224-1870

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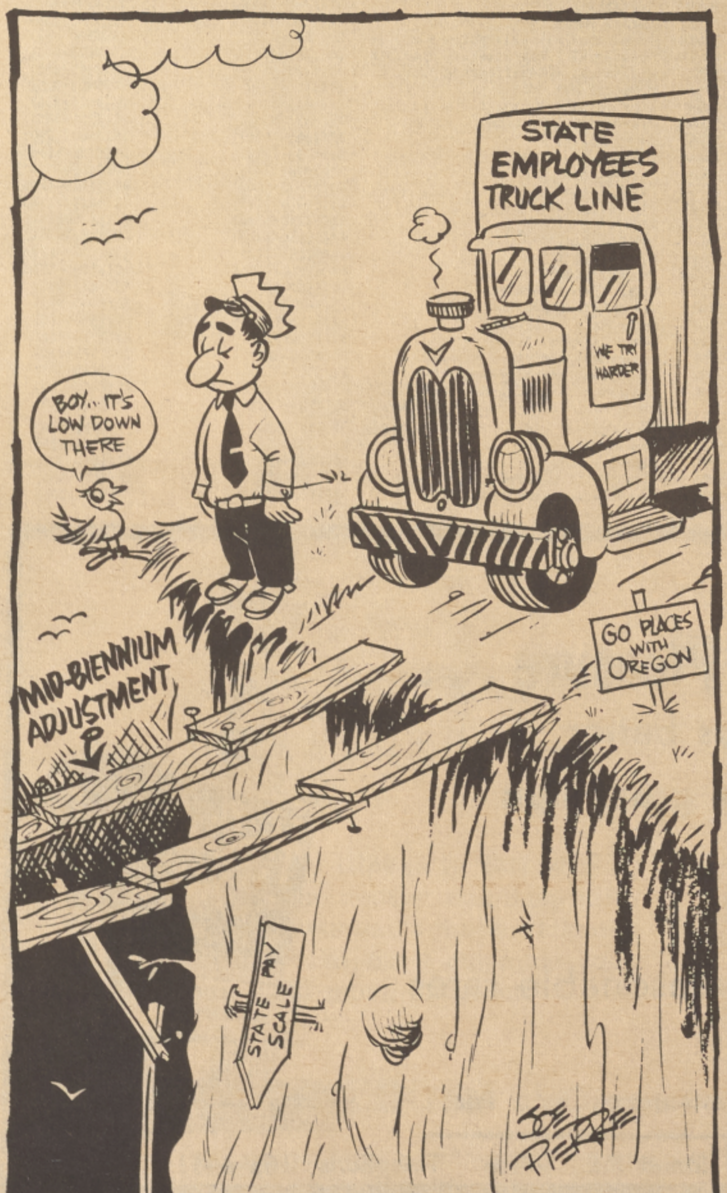

From the . . . Executive Secretary

Until very recently, state employees could hope to receive salary adjustments only every other year, on July 1 following sessions of the Legislature. In 1965, the Legislature appropriated $1.3 million for emergency adjustments in the mid-biennium. The 1967 Legislature appropriated a somewhat larger amount, but this appropriation was reduced to $1 million in the fall special session called by the governor because of a drop in state income.

State employee salaries are behind those of private industry and other governmental units. Inflation makes the situation worse, and there should be provisions for "cost-of-living" increases. However, the appropriation for mid-biennium adjustments is far too small to give adjustments to more than a small minority of employees.

The Emergency Board, an arm of the Legislature, has adopted a policy during the current state financial crisis that the limited amounts of funds available for adjustments be used only to adjust classes that are most out of line or where the biggest problems exist with regard to recruitment or retention of employees.

As reported in the May issue of the NEWS, your OSEA Board of Directors recommended adjustments for employees receiving less than the $280 federal minimum wage; for institution teachers who did not receive adjustments at the time other employees received them last year; for highway maintenance employees whose salaries are now lower than even a number of Oregon counties; and for a few more classes. The Civil Service recommendations to the Emergency Board come pretty close to OSEA's recommendations, except for the highway maintenance employees.

It is hard for an employee who knows that his pay is behind private industry, who finds inflation further reducing the value of the dollar paid to him, to accept not being one of those who will get the adjustments. An employee who is barely managing to get by on his low salary, for instance, is inclined to feel it is unfair for a highly paid doctor to receive a four-step increase while he gets none. The state's problem, however, is that it simply cannot hire doctors at the present salary scale.

One of the most ironic aspects of the apportioning of inadequate funds for adjustments is that a few employees take out their frustrations on the organization which is trying hardest to help them. They do not know how to strike back at the Legislature or others who have the control over what they shall be paid, so a few of them take the rather childish route of dropping OSEA membership, apparently because this is the only way they can get revenge upon someone for their disappointment.

The mid-biennium adjustment fund is a great idea. If sufficient funds were appropriated for the purpose, it could meet inflation problems and keep up with rising costs of living. With appropriations too small to make a dent in salary needs, the apportionment of limited funds in the years between legislative sessions becomes a mess, doing only a little bit of good in comparison to the bad feelings arising in those who think they have not been treated as fairly as others.

Legislators are aware of the problem. Most of them recognize the need for more adequate appropriations, but in the tax and income crisis are being damned from many quarters for failing to meet other financial requests.

OSEA will continue to work for a better salary plan for all employees; for a principle of projecting salary comparisons to catch up the pay lag; and for adjustment funds adequate enough to do the intended job. In doing so, it needs the understanding and support of every state employee.

Correspondence

To the Editor:

We are indeed pleased to learn that the Oregon State Employees Association has awarded $3,750 in scholarships and grants-in-aid to thirteen students planning to attend universities and colleges during the school year 1968-69.

The continuing interest of the Oregon State Employees Association in students who are seeking education beyond high school in Oregon is greatly appreciated by the members of the State Board of Higher Education, the Chancellor, the presidents of the institutions and the staff members of the institutions.

R. L. Collins
Secretary
State Board of
Higher Education

French Appoints Committee Heads

District Nominating Committee chairmen for each of OSEA's nine districts have been appointed by President Smith French. They are:

District One: George Israel, Portland Chapter 17.

District Two: Dan Lake, Forestry Chapter 25.

District Three: Al Smith, Roseburg Chapter 2.

District Four: Watson Warren, OTI Chapter 36.

District Five: George Siler, John Day Chapter 13.

District Six: Paul Weswig, OSU Faculty Chapter 72.

District Seven: Howard Steward, The Dalles Chapter 9.

District Eight: Olaf Fransen, Tillamook Chapter 15.

District Nine: Jack Morgan, Dammasch Chapter 95.

Along with the chairmen, each committee is composed of chapter president and secretaries within each district.

The committees have the responsibility of nominating a slate of candidates for this year's district and assistant district director elections.

650 Employees Get Insurance

Over 650 state employees enrolled for life and income protection insurance during the OSEA-Standard open-enrollment period which ended June 7.

Coverage will become effective July 1.

The insurance was available to all employees regardless of age, health or physical condition.

Before the open period began, OSEA Insurance Director Floyd Baxter announced that the Standard Insurance Company agreed to increase the weekly income protection insurance benefits by ten per cent per week without increasing premiums.

The new weekly benefit is either $55 or $38.50, depending upon the insured's salary classification.

Baxter said Standard also will continue for another year the increased life insurance benefit which was started two years ago. Again, there will be no increase in premiums, he said.